Accident in Baniadih Colliery, Giridih

*60. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many persons were killed and injured on 28th May, 2004 in a caved in coal mine at Baniadih Colliery in Giridih;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount of compensation paid to the next of kin of the deceased and steps taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER FOR COAL AND MINES (SHRI SHIBU SOREN): (a) A per the information available and FIR lodged by the police, four persons were reported to have been killed in an incident at Baniadih Colliery, Giridih on 28th May, 2004.

(b) The Baniadih Colliery was abandoned in mid sixties by the erstwhile National Coal Development Corporation. Illegal mining is reported to have been carried out by outsiders at Baniadih Colliery, Giridih.

(c) No compensation was paid by Central Coalfields Limited to the next of kin as the deceased were neither employees of CCL nor suffered due to any mining activity of CCL. However, an ex-gratia amount of Rs. 5000/- was paid as a humanitarian gesture by CCL to the wife of one deceased whose body was recovered and taken by police.

The State Government had been requested by the Department of Coal to put in place an effective mechanism to check illegal mining and also to direct concerned district authorities to take effective steps to check illegal mining. The Department of Coal has again reiterated earlier instructions to the State Government.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Quality and price of Indian coal *vis-a-vis* other countries

†58. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the quality of coal being produced in the country is assessed low in comparison to the coal being produced and sold by other countries in the international market;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that besides quality, the comparative price of Indian coal is higher as well;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the Government's plans to bring the quality and price of Indian coal at par with the international level?

THE MINISTER FOR COAL AND MINES (SHRI SHIBU SOREN):(a) It is a fact that our country is endowed with generally poor quality coal compared to many other coal producing countries principally due to the nature of coal deposits.

(b) and (c) The price of Indian coal is based on useful heat value (UHV) for non-coking coal and ash percentage for coking coal whereas that of imported non-coking coal is based on gross calorific value (GCV) and for coking coal, it is based on ash per cent which is much lower than Indian coal. The average pit head sale value of Indian coal is one of the lowest on per tonne basis in rupee terms when compared to the CIF price in the international market. However, the delivered price of Indian coal upon transportation over long distance to various consumption points including transportation cost is substantially higher and varies depending on the distance of transport. The foreign coals being superior in terms of ash content and unit heat value, the cost of Indian coal on per therm basis is higher in certain coastal locations.

(d) Indian coal being inherently of inferior quality in nature cannot in general be brought at par with International Coal. However by resorting to coal beneficiation the ash content of Indian coal can be reduced to some extent and its heat value can be increased. The Government has encouraged setting up of coal beneficiation plants by the BOO (Build Own Operate) operators in different coalfields to make available washed coal to the needy consumers.

The average pithead sale value of Indian coal is one of the lowest on per tonne basis in rupee terms and compares well to the CIF price in the international market.

Development of hypersonic Plane

59. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: